DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 704 PS 024 295

TITLE	A Guide for Providing Social Services in Head Start.
INSTITUTION	Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHHS), Washington, DC. Head Start Bureau.
REPORT NO	DHHS-ACF-92-31188
PUB DATE	[92]
NOTE	40p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Rearing; Community; Community Programs; Community Resources; Family (Sociological Unit); Family Involvement; *Family Life; *Family Programs; Needs Assessment; *Outreach Programs; Parent Participation; Planning; Preschool Education; Recordkeeping; Recruitment; *Social Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

The social services component of Head Start links family, Head Start, and the community. This document addresses components of Head Start, providing Head Start staff who have social services responsibility with a guide to the provision of services to families. The chapters in the guide are: (1) "Overview of Head Start," including its origins, assumptions, growth, and major components of education, health, parent involvement, and social services; (2) "Social Services in Head Start," detailing philosophy, objectives, and functions; (3) "Social Services Staff: Roles and Relationships"; (4) "The Social Service Process"; (5) "Outreach, Recruitment, and Enrollment"; (6) "Family Needs Assessment"; (7) "Providing Services to Meet Needs," including counseling and referral, emergency assistance, community resources, follow-up, and monitoring absenteeism; (8) "Coordination of Community Resources and Advocacy"; (9) "Establishing and Maintaining Records," including setting up files and maintaining confidentiality; and (10) "Head Start's Legacy to Families." (BGC)

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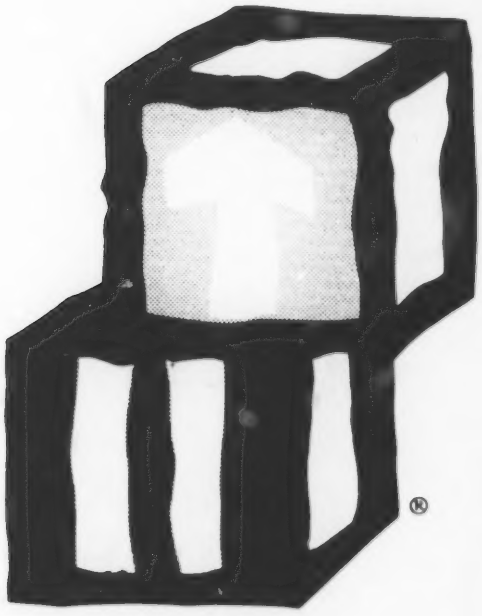
A Guide For

Providing Social Services In Head Start



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DHHS Publication No. (ACF) 92-31188

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FOREWORD

The primary role of social services in Head Start is to provide support to families as they work to strengthen their family units and improve the quality of their daily lives.

All families need support systems at various times in life. The difference between many Head Start families and their more affluent counterparts is simply lack of information.

One of the main functions of the social services component of Head Start is to supply that information. The social services component of Head Start serves as a link between the family, the program, and the community.

Head Start staff with social services responsibility are hired to provide families with information about the Head Start program and about support services available in the community; to assist families in locating and securing needed services; and to serve as advocates for Head Start and catalysts for change within the community. Additionally, where possible, Head Start social services staff provide direct services to families with enrolled children.

The purpose of this document is to provide Head Start staff having social services responsibility with a guide to the provision of social services to families. The guide will address the overall philosophy of Head Start, the role of social services in Head Start, the major objectives of the social services component, and some means by which these objectives can be achieved. These guidelines are designed to help every Head Start Center develop a social services program which will provide effective linkages between the Center, the family and the community.

PART ONE

SOCIAL SERVICES IN HEAD START

Chapter One

OVERVIEW OF HEAD START

Head Start was created in 1964 under the Economic Opportunity Act as part of the "war on poverty". The program was designed to provide pre-school children from economically and socially disadvantaged families with a "head start" on formal education. This primary goal of the program was to be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive child development program which would provide for the physical, social, and intellectual growth of children.

The program was based on the premise that children living in poverty are subject to risks to and unintentional neglect of their health, education, and welfare. From the time of conception, the social and economic disadvantages of poverty have their effect on the child, because health services are usually inadequate and often inaccessible. Experiences are necessarily limited, so that the young child is often handicapped in his ability to communicate, and is frequently stifled in his desire to learn. Head Start was viewed as an opportunity to intervene in the developmental process in such a way as to insure that the children enrolled in the program, and their families, received the services necessary to their positive growth and development.

A comprehensive, community-based program, concerned with the health, education, and welfare of its participants, Head Start provided nutritional, medical, dental, and social services, and actively involved the parents, family, and community in the child development center. Outreach to home and community, and the involvement of parents and community members in the program, was one of the most unique features of Head Start, and established a model for similar child development programs.

As Head Start grew and developed, its success became apparent in all areas. Not only did the children enrolled in the program benefit, but the parents, families, and total community reaped the benefits of Head Start. Parents became involved in the program; became active decision-makers; received training and went to work as volunteers and paid employees; became aware of community services, or the lack of them; and began to appreciate the influence that they could have on the community. Total families gained an increased sense of dignity and purpose as they sought and received improved services, learned how to work their way through the often complicated network of community services, and saw their children receiving the rewards of their efforts. A sense of pride and togetherness was instilled in the entire community, as joint efforts produced results — clean up a vacant lot, get playground equipment installed, open a neighborhood clinic, get another bus line operating — and everyone enjoyed the results.

Today Head Start serves more than 350,000 children in over 1300 programs across the country. Head Start has four major components — education, health, parent involvement, and social services — which continue to provide comprehensive services to children and families.

Chapter Two

SOCIAL SERVICES IN HEAD START

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

The philosophy of social services in Head Start is that of supporting families. The social services component of Head Start represents an organized method of assisting families to assess their needs, and then providing those services that will build upon the individual strengths of families to meet their own needs.

The aim of the Head Start approach to social services is recognition of the need to be treated with dignity and respect and the desire to develop a sense of self-direction and self-esteem. When things are done for you, over and over again, you begin to feel that you are incapable of performing the task yourself, your self-confidence is lessened, and you learn only that this is one thing you do not have the ability to do.

On the other hand, if a friend who has already been through an experience, shares with you your first encounter with the same experience, gives you a few tips along the way, and talks with you about how you made out, your response is likely to be, "Well, that wasn't so bad".

In Head Start, social services are conducted *with* the families in the program, not *for* the families. The emphasis is on families and individuals using their own strengths to resolve the conflicts in their lives from environmental pressures.

The focus for the social services staff is on support. Families must make their own decisions concerning which alternatives within the Head Start social services network they choose to utilize — which options they choose to exercise. The inter-personal relationships established between staff and family members provide the vehicle through which effective decision-making takes place.

The revised Head Start Performance Standards state that the " . . . process of getting families to utilize their strengths to make maximum use of community resources is one of the primary aims of the Social Services component in Head Start". This statement can be interpreted in many ways, depending upon one's point of view. In Head Start it means that the social services component is concerned with supporting families in their efforts to:

- become more aware of their individual strengths;
- maintain a strong sense of family pride and self-worth;
- improve their ability to identify and assess their needs;
- remove obstacles preventing parents and family members from entering into meaningful activities with their children; and
- increase their capacity to find and utilize community supports and resources to the family.

The Head Start social services component will have reached its goal if each family it serves:

- Has developed or increased the ability to identify its strengths and weaknesses.
- Has the capacity to recognize what they need when they are having difficulties, and where to get assistance.
- Feels in control of their own lives.
- Has confidence in dealing with a complex network of community agencies and services.

PROGRAM

Staff

Head Start social services staff are charged with the responsibility for providing social services for children and families enrolled in the program. Some staff members may have a graduate degree in social work, others may not have completed high school, but all have one objective in common — concern for the welfare of the families in the program and working together to effect improved quality of life for all.

Services

According to the revised Head Start Performance Standards, the broad basic needs and the specific social, emotional, and/or parenting needs of families can only be met through a comprehensive social services program, coordinated with the other Head Start component efforts. The social services component attempts to meet needs through the following activities:

- community outreach
- recruitment and enrollment of children
- family needs assessments
- providing information about available community resources and how to obtain and use them
- referrals
- emergency assistance and/or crisis intervention
- follow-up
- recordkeeping
- advocacy

Implementation

The method used for service delivery to families can be either direct or indirect. The staff person can either provide the service directly or take appropriate steps to insure that the family or individual obtains the needed services. In most instances, the role of the Head Start social services program is to act as a catalyst, facilitating the action to be taken by other supportive services within the community.

Head Start staff directly implements the outreach, recruitment, and enrollment activities in order to bring families into the program; they conduct family needs assessments with families directly; they are responsible for making families aware of community resources and how to use them; they are directly responsible for follow-up and recordkeeping; and they serve as advocates for families by recognizing changes needed in the community and taking action to bring about such change.

It may be necessary sometimes for Head Start, through the social services program, to provide needed services that are either missing in the community or that are presently unavailable to Head Start families.

Such examples as arranging for psychiatric care for a child or helping the family to find a nursing home for an aged grandmother represent instances where Head Start helps families locate needed social services not available in the community. In the event of a fire in the neighborhood, Head Start might provide direct services to families by setting up a temporary shelter in the center, conducting a clothing drive, and providing meals for the burned-out family. In most programs, direct provision of services can only be implemented to a limited degree, due to staff and budget limitations.

Coordination

Coordination of social services activities with the other activities of the Head Start program, and of the Head Start program with other community agencies is an important function of the social services component. The social services staff must be involved in classroom, parent involvement, nutrition, and health activities in the center in order to have a complete picture of the child and family, and in order to make recommendations to other staff members concerning the social services needs of child and family. The staff also has a responsibility to make other resources in the community aware of the Head Start program and the needs of Head Start families, while working with community agencies to obtain needed services.

It is the role of social services in Head Start to promote community commitment to the goals of Head Start by serving as a bridge between the center, the family, and community resources, so that the needs of Head Start children and families will be met.

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL SERVICE FUNCTIONS IN HEAD START

The outline which follows is intended to summarize the functions of the Head Start social services component for easy reference.

Recruitment and Enrollment

Recruitment

1. Identification of recruitment sources
2. Development of publicity
3. Recruitment followup
4. Beginning the development of relationship with parents

Enrollment

1. Processing the application
2. Determination of eligibility
3. Interpretation of agency
4. Arranging for required medical procedures
5. Identification of special problems

Services to Individuals and Families

Counseling (both individual and group)

1. Diagnosis and evaluation of problem situations
2. Short-term casework treatment
3. "Informal" counseling

Referrals

1. Making use of available and appropriate community resources
2. Preparing clients (family members) for referrals

Concrete Services

1. Accompanying families to community resources when necessary.
2. Enabling families to secure needed services.

Planning and Development of Parent Programs

1. Helping parents to organize parent group programs in various areas (e.g., educational, recreational, social, cultural, self-help such as Clothing Exchanges and Consumers' Cooperatives)
2. Helping parents to "connect" — as individuals — with established community groups and organizations with which they can maintain contact after their relationship with Head Start comes to an end

Helping Families to Use the Medicaid Program

1. Planning and implementing campaigns to encourage families to apply for Medicaid
2. Planning and implementing campaigns to familiarize families with benefits available under Medicaid
3. Locating and identifying local providers of medical and dental services that can be used under the Medicaid umbrella
4. In conjunction with the Health Services Coordinator, arranging for local hospitals and clinics to provide medical and dental services (under Medicaid) to Head Start families

Community Relations and Social Action

1. Community profile development
2. Community studies (e.g., identifying unmet needs, fact finding)
3. Information bank on available community resources
4. Development of inter-agency relations
5. Development of parents' organizations
6. Enabling families to develop a social action program
7. Helping family and parent organizations to "connect" with established community groups, organizations and institutions

Evaluation and In-Service Training

Evaluation

1. Evaluating the effectiveness of practices and techniques
2. Self-evaluations
3. Following up evaluations (e.g., through discussion with supervisors, questions at staff meetings, etc.)

In-Service Training

1. Identifying needs, gaps, weaknesses and problems that can be constructively dealt with thru in-service training
2. Using all available in-service training resources (whether in or out of the agency) to strengthen the program

Work in Support of Other Staff

The social service program supports the *Director* by:

1. Participating in over-all program planning and in policy decisions related to social services functions and activities
2. Understanding and implementing agreed-on policies concerning the role, function, duties and responsibilities of the social services component
3. Keeping the Director currently informed about on-going programs and problems
4. Requesting authorization or approval whenever necessary
5. Making recommendations for changes in policies and practices

The social service program supports the *classroom teaching staff* by:

1. Sharing relevant information about the child and family with the teacher
2. Following up on absentees
3. Coordinating with appropriate specialists in the program (e.g., psychologist, speech therapists, etc.) in the provision of on-going services to individuals and families

Chapter Three

SOCIAL SERVICES STAFF: ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

STAFF ROLES

The focus of the social services program is on the child, the family, and the community as a group of interacting personalities. The role of the social services staff is to provide support to the child and family, to serve as a resource to the family, and to act as a liaison between the Head Start Center, the family and the community.

Personal growth and development and self-sufficiency are some of the major goals of Head Start. Supporting families as they improve their ability to recognize, examine, analyze and select their own choices; and to recognize the risks involved and the consequences of making a decision to choose one alternative over another, is the function of the social services staff.

The mission of Social Services personnel is to insure that resources and services are available to each child and his family in the Head Start program. The impact of social services on family living and on individual growth and development should be guided by the social services program and the social services staff. Within the resources of the classroom there should be growth incentives and developmental provisions for each child. Within the local and larger community, the social services staff serve as advocates to insure that needed resources and services are available not only to Head Start family members but to other residents as well.

Head Start social services staff have six primary roles to fulfill:

1. Provide support and serve as a resource to families.
2. Act as a liaison (a bridge) between Head Start, the family and the community.
3. Provide training and education to families in using available resources and services, and in locating those that are unavailable or inaccessible.
4. Serve as a resource within the Head Start program for other staff members.
5. Maintain accurate records for the benefit of families and other staff members.
6. Act as an advocate (a supporter) of the children and families enrolled in the program, both within the center and in the larger community.

STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

Each of the roles described is carried out through the relationships established and maintained by the social services staff with families, with other staff members, and with community representatives. The social services personnel are the public relations experts for Head Start.

Families

The first direct contact that a family has with Head Start is usually the social services staff. This first contact is crucial to the degree of comfort the family is going to feel with Head Start and to the amount of involvement the family will have in the overall program.

Parents and other family members must be preceived, accepted, and treated as responsible adults who desire to help their children, their families, and themselves through action, and who are capable of making decisions concerning their actions. It is critical during the first interview for the social services staff to make parents feel comfortable with Head Start, worthwhile as individuals, and important to their child's development.

The child absorbs his family's beliefs and feelings and reflects them in his own self-image and in the way he views the world around him. Self-concept is very powerful in the emergence of potentialities of human beings. Therefore, if Head Start is going to help the child, it must also help his family maintain its dignity, stability, and have confidence that the conditions under which it lives can be changed. Head Start is designed to help the family achieve a sense of well being. When a family participant in the program has the feeling of well being, he is proud of who he is as a person, he feels able to stand on his own feet, and he sees hope for the future. Professional people in social services call this having positive mental health — a state or condition in which an individual feels secure physically, mentally, and emotionally and is able to cope with his problems.

By establishing good relationships with the families being served, the social services staff can more effectively provide support to families, because family members will trust them. They will be better able to fulfill their roles as resources to families, because they will know the family members and their wants and needs, and they will be familiar with and able to draw on the strengths of the family as resources for themselves. They will be more likely to obtain accurate information for the family's records, thus providing another resource to the family.

Linking the family with the center offers the opportunity for social services personnel to determine what the people themselves see as the urgent needs they have to face; what steps they have already taken in dealing with problems; what resources are lacking; what steps should be taken and how these might lead to involvement in the opportunities and program activities offered at the Head Start Center. This approach is designed to see that the kind of social services provided are those most needed by the children and families being served.

Perhaps most important, this relationship can represent a source of comfort and support to both family and staff members. Head Start is people, caring about each other, and helping one another to grow and develop — Head Start is friendship.

Staff Members

Social services personnel occupy a unique position on the Head Start staff, in that they represent the most direct link with the families enrolled as total entities. The education staff relates primarily to the children in the classroom, and with families only as they are concerned with classroom activities. The health staff's main concern is the physical and mental well-being of the children enrolled in Head Start, and the staff interactions with families center around health concerns. The parent involvement staff focuses on the specific needs and interests of the parents, and again, see only one side of the family.

The social services staff are the only members of the Head Start staff who meet regularly with the entire family, often in the home. By having a complete picture of the family, the social services staff can serve as invaluable resources to their colleagues in Head Start, by providing information about the family which can help other staff members to improve the delivery of education, health, and parent involvement services.

The Head Start staff can best serve children and families by working as a team, and the relationships established between the social services staff and other staff members can be effective tools for the establishment of a team approach to serving children and families.

Community Representatives

The quality and amount of social services in any given Head Start center are dependent on available community resources and services. Connecting the needs of families in the Head Start center with community resources and services is the responsibility of the social services staff. These resources and services should be used for information, training and education as well as for referrals for treatment and rehabilitation on an individual basis.

The social services staff's role in making and maintaining personal relationships with community agency and organization officials is critical to the total effectiveness of the social services

component. It is important for social services staff to get out into the community and meet people concerned with the provision of support services; explain the purposes and the benefits of Head Start; obtain a working knowledge of the procedures which one must follow in order to obtain a given service; and maintain an on-going relationship with people in key positions within service agencies and organizations. By so doing, the staff make their job easier and more effective. When support services are needed, they can make immediate referrals, provide the necessary information on process and procedure, and follow-up with a contact to the right person within the agency.

The following page provides possible job descriptions for social services staff. The first description represents a staff person working as a coordinator, and serving several centers having at least one person on staff responsible for providing social services. The second description represents a center-level staff member with responsibility for the provision of social services to all families with children enrolled in that center.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION
Family Services Coordinator

Duties of Coordinator

1. The Family Services Coordinator will see that the ACYF Performance Standards are carried out in cooperation with each Family Worker. This includes the areas of Social Services, Parent Involvement, and Mental Health.
2. The Coordinator insures that the parents of Head Start children are fully integrated into each center's program, and that their needs are being met to the extent of the program's capabilities.
3. The Coordinator helps organize and oversee the procedures for program recruitment and enrollment.
4. The Coordinator will work with the Family Worker to set up parent training activities for the program and each center.
5. The Coordinator is a member of the Central Staff meetings. Also the Coordinator will attend various state meetings and workshops, as well as set up and run regular component meetings. Minimally, weekly visits to each center are encouraged.
6. The Coordinator assists in organizing the In-Service and Pre-Service programs for each year.
7. The Coordinator is responsible for seeing that the Social Services Plans are updated each year.
8. The Coordinator supervises the utilization of all available resources and supervises the completion of all required files and insures their confidentiality.
9. The Coordinator is expected to take part in Pre-Service and In-Service training and attend various staff meetings when requested.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION
Family Services Worker

Duties of Worker

1. The Family Worker will have to be familiar with all aspects of the Head Start program including the Performance Standards, the program plans and all program policies. This person must have an awareness of the philosophy and goals of the program in order to help the parents become active advocates for their children.
2. The Worker is responsible for child recruitment and enrollment for the program year in each respective center.
3. The Worker will also assist the Education staff in the classroom placement of children.
4. The Family Worker is responsible for setting up the preliminary screenings of all children and for carrying out the medical and dental program in each center including setting up child physicals, immunizations and transportation to and from appointments.
5. The Worker is responsible for facilitating parent involvement in the center, including participation as volunteers in parent training sessions.
6. The Worker familiarizes the parents with available resources in the area served, makes and accepts referrals for the children and families to and from other agencies.
7. The worker makes periodic home visits.
8. The Worker is responsible for maintaining current and accurate records as required by the program and for insuring their confidentiality.
9. The Worker will help organize and carry out parent training activities and support groups.
10. The Family Worker will attend Pre-Service, In-Service and all staff meetings.

Chapter Four

THE SOCIAL SERVICE PROCESS

The method by which social services staff plan for and implement services to meet needs is called the *social service process*. The process involves seven steps designed to help the staff develop and carry out a comprehensive social services program which will best meet the needs of the Head Start families for which they are responsible.

GATHER INFORMATION

Some of the information needed for social services program planning will have been collected by staff members during outreach, recruitment, and enrollment activities. Additional information will be available from the family needs assessment. Staff can further supplement information by making home visits or telephone calls to families.

As a national program concerned with families, Head Start considers the family as being more extended than the classical description of a nuclear family constellation of father, mother and children. The family in this instance is likely to include one or more grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts and even persons who are not blood relatives, but who live in the household. We must assume that all those living in the household exert some influence on the life of the child, and that the home environment plays a critical part in his development. It is important for the social services staff to include all those living in the home in the information gathering process.

STUDY AND ASSESS INFORMATION

Once all sources of information have been identified and used, staff should list the social services needs of each individual family, for inclusion in that family's file, and then compile the individual lists into a master list of social service needs. In most instances, a given need will appear on several individual lists, but need only be noted once on the master list, with a number indicating how many families need the service.

SAMPLE LIST OF NEEDS

Improved Housing (2)
Clothing for School-Age Children (10)
Shoes for School-Age Children (6)
Eyeglasses for Family Members (2)
Dental Care for School-Age Children (3)
Medical Care for Family Members (1)
Food Stamps (15)
Nursing Home for Elderly Family Member (1)
In-Home Care for Infirmed Family Member (1)
After School Care (8)

ESTABLISH OBJECTIVES

Once the social services staff have a list of family needs, the next step is to establish realistic objectives. Staff members should meet to review the list and rank items in order of greatest need. Then prioritize items in terms of those things which can be accomplished immediately, and those which will require continuous work over a period of time. The two lists (greatest need and order of accomplishment) may not always coincide, but by looking at the problem in this way, staff can begin to develop a plan of action which will be successful.

Although some items of great importance may not be dealt with immediately, staff can show families how they are working on the problem, and can demonstrate their effectiveness by obtaining immediate solutions to other problems. This method of working through situations lets families know that the staff really do care and are trying, and it provides staff members with some sense of achievement and effectiveness.

To undertake monumental problems at the outset, knowing that it will be months before the problems can be resolved only lessens the credibility of the staff with the families concerned, and heightens the levels of frustration and feelings of inadequacy which staff members may already have.

DEVELOP PLAN OF ACTION

Social services are human services that represent the blending of various essential community services in order to provide the necessary supports to families for strengthening the individual members and the family as a unit. The collective efforts and interests of many are made available for the support of one person or a group of persons within the family. The long range objective of Head Start as a community action program is to effect a permanent increase in the ability of individuals and groups within communities to improve their own conditions with the use of appropriate supports.

It is the job of the social services staff to develop a plan of action (based on the objectives established in Step 3) which can be carried out realistically, and which will assist families to further develop their own strengths. A plan of action which involves doing things *for* the families in need of services, will only help family members to develop dependence upon Head Start and the social services staff.

The ultimate goal of the social services program is to assist families and individuals to develop greater independence and an increased ability to utilize their own resources to identify and assess their own needs, and to obtain the services to meet these needs. Therefore, the plan of action which the social services staff develops should be one designed to support families to achieve the objectives they have identified. If the objective is to obtain better housing, then the plan might be to help the family by providing a resource list of available subsidized housing and assisting family members with completing necessary applications and forms. A plan which involved finding and securing improved housing *for* the family would work against the ultimate goals of independence and self-reliance. Head Start, as a comprehensive program, provides social services as developmental tools for the child and his family, to strengthen their own capabilities.

DETERMINE AND OBTAIN SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Few Head Start centers are able to maintain a full-time, professionally trained social services staff. Most centers operate with a staff that represents a number of different levels of training and expertise, or with a staff which consists of only one individual, who may have other duties as well. It is virtually impossible for any one person assuming the responsibility for the provision of social services to possess all of the skills and knowledge necessary to do all that the job calls for.

This step in the social services process requires the staff to do some self-evaluation. Staff members must assess their individual skills and knowledge base in order to determine whether additional help is needed to achieve the objectives they have established, and if so, from what source they can obtain additional help. The answer may be as simple as asking some questions of another staff member, or consulting a handbook or guide such as this one. Then again, staff members may need to seek additional training or call in outside help.

The important element in this step is honesty with oneself. Staff members must be able to recognize when they are in need of additional help, and willing to seek it. Only when they are fully prepared to assume the task at hand, can staff members serve as effective resources and supports to Head Start families.

IMPLEMENT PLAN

This step indicates that the task for the social services staff is to see to it that resources and services in the Center, within the classroom, and within the community be made available to each child and his family, as needed. While each child and each family must be regarded and approached on an individual basis, and full recognition given to that fact, the child and his family must be considered also as part of a larger group of people involved in an effort to effect institutional changes. Parents, as citizens, and other residents in the community must be a part of the planning and implementation of any plan of action that will effect the direction and the rate of change of conditions under which they live. So parents and other family members should be involved in each step of the social service process. Even during step 5, there is no harm in making parents aware of the fact that the staff may need additional information and/or knowledge in order to provide the needed support.

The social services personnel should be able, by preparation through in-service training and education, to examine with parents and families situations as they are, and to take steps to build from there. It is the families who have to face the day-to-day experience of struggling to exist with dignity within their present circumstances. They can best express their relative needs and explain the efforts they have made to survive. They are aware of the high possibility of a better life. But, it often seems to be far away. The social services staff should provide supports to families as they struggle to improve their lives. It is the job of the staff to show families how community resources and services can be helpful, and to help them identify the gaps in group and community life, so that they can realize their own goals. The staff should put at the disposal of the people all of their knowledge and experience that is relevant.

By approaching problems as a team, working toward a common goal, staff and parents can put a realistic plan into action, and achieve at least a measure of success — together.

EVALUATE PROGRESS OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Periodic review and assessment of goals and objectives provides both staff and parents with a feeling of accomplishment, and forms the basis for future planning. The social service process is an on-going one, which may take place several times during a program year. The following chart illustrates the process by using examples for each step, using the sample list of needs outlined earlier in this chapter.

THE SOCIAL SERVICE PROCESS

Step 1 *Gather Information*	Step 2 *Study and Assess Information*	Step 3 *Establish Objectives*	Step 4 *Develop Plan of Action*
Review all forms completed during outreach, recruitment, and enrollment. Review family needs assessments. Make additional home visits and conduct personal interviews. Make followup telephone calls.	Clothing and shoes needed for school-age children. Improved housing needed. Nursing home care needed for elderly family. After-school care needed.	Secure clothing and shoes for school-aged children. Secure housing in newer, more spacious facility. Secure placement for family member in nursing home. Establish after-school program in center.	Develop plans for center clothing exchange. Locate listings of all available subsidized housing in area, and eligibility requirements. Locate all accredited nursing homes in surrounding area, and determine length of waiting list and acceptance requirements. Develop general plan for staffing and operation of after-school program.

Step 5 *Determine and Obtain Skills and Knowledge*	Step 6 *Implement Plan*	Step 7 *Evaluate Progress or Accomplishments*
Find out how many families have school children. Contact churches in area and list sources of help. Call area HUD office for resource list. Consult local realtors about possible assistance. Contact local clinic for resource list. Ask PI staff for availability of parent volunteers to help with program. Approach Director with plan and request review and approval.	Get families and churches to donate clothing and shoes. Arrange for collection, sorting and tagging of items. Develop list of available housing. Contact managers for application forms. Make lists and assistance available. Develop list of acceptable nursing homes. Drive family to homes for tour and inspection. Assist family in completing application forms. Develop list of parent volunteers. Work on list of appropriate activities with parents. Secure approval from Director. Set-aside space.	Two clothing drives conducted. Items collected, sorted and tagged by parents. Ten families have used the exchange. One family relocated. One family wait-listed for 3 bedroom apartment. Application forms completed and submitted to Rest Haven Home. Director has approved project. Cafeteria area made available from 3-6 p.m. Ten volunteers committed. Program of activities still being worked on.

PART TWO

ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM

Chapter Five

OUTREACH, RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

Outreach, recruitment, and enrollment are the first steps in establishing contact between families, the community, and the Head Start staff. These activities often represent the very first contact that a new family has with Head Start. Since first impressions tend to be lasting ones, it is very important that the social services staff who perform outreach, recruitment, and enrollment activities, do so in a manner that will encourage individuals to be a part of the Head Start family.

OUTREACH

Outreach means exactly what the word says. It means "reaching out" to others. The social services staff must reach out to the community on behalf of Head Start. Outreach activities involve getting out into the community and making contacts with individuals, agencies, and groups within the community to publicize the Head Start program, enlisting community support for Head Start and its objectives, and making families aware of the recruitment effort.

The outreach process includes contacting churches and other community organizations to let them know about Head Start and to get their help in identifying eligible families. The social services staff must also visit support agencies located in the community or serving the community to acquaint them with Head Start and its objectives, and to determine the following: (1) what services are available to families; (2) what services are lacking in the community; (3) how available services are obtained; and (4) what sources can be used to obtain services which are not immediately available within the community.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment means getting children into the Head Start Program. Recruitment activities involve seeking out those families within the community who are the most in need of support services, and whose children are most eligible for enrollment in Head Start.

The recruitment process includes a review of the community needs assessment and the provision of all important information to the recruitment committee by the social services staff. The social services staff and the recruitment committee then work together to evaluate the information available on the community and the families residing in it, to identify those families with the greatest need for Head Start, and to establish objectives for the recruiting effort.

Once objectives are established, the social services staff develop written criteria (guidelines) for the selection of families to enroll in Head Start, and submit these guidelines to the recruitment committee for review and approval. Then, using the guidelines to identify those families to be recruited, the social services staff begin to contact families personally through home visits and telephone calls. Recruitment is on-going and progress must be reviewed periodically.

Recruitment is perhaps the most critical task that the social services staff have to perform, in that the manner in which families are approached initially often determines how they feel about Head Start and how involved they become in the overall program.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment refers to the formal process of taking children into the program. Enrollment involves preparing the proper forms; obtaining necessary space, supplies and equipment (such as tables, chairs, pencils, etc.); making staff assignments and getting additional help from parents already in the program; and actually signing up the specified number of new children.

OUTREACH, RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Tasks	*Gather Information*	*Study and Assess Information*	*Establish Objectives*
OUTREACH	Conduct community needs assessment. Identify local agencies and organizations. Identify eligible families. Determine public relations possibilities.	Examine local population and available services. Contact local organizations. Determine number of families eligible for Head Start. List families with special needs. Contact local publicity sources: T.V., radio, newspapers.	Attempt to reach all eligible families to make them aware of Head Start. Make community aware of Head Start and the benefits offered to all.
RECRUITMENT	Review needs assessment and list of eligible families. Meet with recruitment committee to review information.	Ask recruitment committee to evaluate information, add any new information, and set priorities.	Meet with recruitment committee to establish objectives: target areas list of families range in age of children Develop written criteria for selection of families. Plan for on-going recruitment activities.
ENROLLMENT	Review enrollment forms. Determine what is needed for enrollment activities. Determine staff needs for enrollment.	Prepare enrollment schedule. Make list of materials, supplies, and equipment needed. Make list of staff needs.	Enroll as many children as possible from list of eligible families recruited. Make the enrollment process pleasant for families.

Once enrollment is completed, staff should meet to discuss how things went, what could be done to improve the process, and initial plans for the next year.

Each year, the entire process of outreach, recruitment, and enrollment should be reviewed, evaluated, and modified or changed, as needed. Staff should set objectives and make plans on the basis of this evaluation. An overview of the outreach, recruitment, and enrollment process is presented below.

Develop Plan of Action	*Determine and Obtain Skills and Knowledge*	*Implement Plan*	*Evaluate Progress or Accomplishments*
Establish a schedule for the conduct of the community needs assessment and other outreach activities. Make staff assignments for outreach activities.	Review plan in relation to available staff. Determine need for additional assistance and or training.	Conduct needs assessment. Meet with community leaders and service providers. Arrange for publicity spots. Make list of eligible families.	Review progress. See if objectives were accomplished. Look for areas where outreach could be improved. Maintain community contacts.
Establish schedule for recruitment activities. Make staff and volunteer assignments for recruitment activities.	Review staff needs and availability. Determine need for additional assistance and or training.	Carry out recruitment activities as planned.	Review recruitment process to see if objectives were met. Meet with recruitment committee to evaluate process and begin planning for next year.
Establish schedule of enrollment activities. Make staff and volunteer assignments for enrollment activities.	Review schedule and staffing assignments. Determine need for additional assistance and or training.	Carry out enrollment activities as planned.	Review entire outreach, recruitment, and enrollment process. Identify areas needing improvement and begin planning for next year.

Chapter Six

FAMILY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Family Needs Assessment (FNA) is to develop a total profile or picture of the individual families being served by the Head Start program. The FNA will identify the interests, desires, goals, needs, and strengths of the family. The information provided in the FNA will help the social services staff determine how Head Start can best work with the family to maximize and maintain its strengths, while strengthening areas of need and or concern.

It is important to involve all members of the family in the FNA. Family members should be approached with respect, and interviewed in a pleasant, non-judgemental manner. The conduct of the FNA provides the best vehicle for the social services staff to establish a positive rapport with the families they are serving — a rapport which will be on-going and will deepen as confidentiality and trust are built.

There are five tasks involved in the completion of a family needs assessment:

1. Developing an interview instrument.
2. Conducting the interview.
3. Contacting other community agencies with which the family is involved.
4. Following up the interview with staff and family.
5. Analyzing the information gathered and preparing a Family Assistance Plan.

We will examine each of these five tasks in the remainder of this chapter.

DEVELOP INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

The instrument used during the interview is very important, because a good instrument (form) will yield a lot of information using very few questions.

It may be necessary to do a little studying to prepare for this task. If a FNA has been done in the past, the social services staff should review the instruments used before and determine from other staff members how successful the form was. If this is the first time that an FNA has been done, staff may need to go to the local library and ask to look at other forms that have been used for a similar purpose.

The staff should be clear on *what* information they want to gather on each family, *where* it will be used, and *how* it will be used. Staff should not gather any information that cannot be used to constructively assist the family, and the information collected should be consistent with Head Start needs and the Performance Standards for social services.

The Head Start intake process and enrollment form will provide some information, and the information gathered should not be requested during the FNA interview. The instrument should have open-ended questions and not just "yes" and "no" answers, so that the family can really participate in the conversation and tell the their own story. For instance, instead of asking, "Do you read to Alice at bedtime?", a better question would be, "What kinds of things do you do with Alice when you have free time?" The instrument should also have space for the staff member conducting the interview to jot down observations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The interview form should be constructed so that objectives can be established by the staff and family from the information gathered, and a realistic Family Assistance Plan (FAP) developed. The instrument should reveal:

- How the family sees itself participating in and using Head Start.
- What the family wants to achieve during the year.
- What community agencies are already providing the family with support services, and how the family feels about the agencies and the services received.
- How the family members interact with one another, and how they see their family structure.
- What interests, skills, and talents individual family members possess.

Once developed, the social services staff should meet with their supervisor and the psychologist who works with the center (if there is one) to have them review and comment on the interview form. It must be reviewed and approved by the Parent Policy Committee also.

CONDUCT FNA INTERVIEWS

The social services staff should be thoroughly familiar with the interview form before going out on an interview. Questions should not have to be read. The interview should flow along with natural conversation.

Contact the Family

The first step in conducting the interview is to contact the family. This should be done by sending a letter which explains the purpose of the interview and in which the staff member requests an appointment. Follow up the letter with a telephone call to confirm the appointment, and to establish before hand how much time is needed for the interview, what information is needed, and how the information will be used.

Be on time for the appointment. Explain again to those family members present, the purpose of the interview and how the information will be used. Explain that the interview is part of an overall process to help the family to decide how they can best use the services offered by Head Start. To the extent possible, establish overall objectives with the family as the interview is being conducted.

Conduct the Interview

Carry out the interview in as conversational a manner as possible. Let the family know that you will be taking notes, and then pick up key phrases and bits of information for note taking purposes. DO NOT WRITE DOWN EVERY WORD! Repeat responses that family members make when necessary for clarification. Compliment family members on their strengths and accomplishments.

Identify with the family those areas in which they need support, and explain how Head Start can assist them. Summarize the interview briefly, and with the family, decide what the next steps (follow-up) should be, and when they can begin. If appropriate, invite family members who have exhibited interest in doing so to come to the center to contribute some of their time, skill, and/or knowledge to the program, and identify activities in which they can participate.

Observe Carefully

Observations are an important part of any successful interview. Observations should be described as they occur, without any judgment on the interviewer's part. Observations should cover three areas: the physical environment in which the family lives; the emotional climate among family members; and the social interactions that take place within the family.

Physical surroundings can tell a great deal about a family. Observe the location of the home and then describe the neighborhood in general. Describe the house and the items in the home. Note the presence or absence of items, such as sufficient chairs for the entire family to sit down and eat together, plants, books, television, etc.

Tune in to the *emotional* atmosphere in the home, and observe the relationships exhibited between and among family members. Determine the leadership within the family — who provides the greatest stimulation to other family members? Note the amount of emotional stability and security

among family members — do they seem comfortable with one another? Is there much physical contact?

Identify the *social* climate in the family. Determine what the family does to relax. Observe those things which they say makes them happy, and identify things which can be realistically obtained to improve the family's social climate. For example, membership in a posh country club for a family member who likes golf may be unobtainable, but there may be a local driving range about which the family doesn't know.

CONTACT LOCAL AGENCIES

The reason for contacting other agencies is to determine whether Head Start and agency activities are complementary and not repetitious, to insure that there are common goals for the family, and to make certain that the family receives the support services needed.

If the family is already working with another agency, the social services staff must ask for permission to contact the agency. Explain that the contact is to insure coordination, reduce any overlap in services, and better assist the family. If the family is not working with other agencies, the social services staff should determine whether the family needs and/or wants to become involved with an available agency to help them meet some needs.

If the family is already involved or desires to become involved, the social services staff should visit the appropriate agency and establish contact with an agency representative to determine complementary actions and to establish a rapport for future communications.

If it is determined that the agency and Head Start can work together, the social services staff should prepare the agency for the family's visit, determine the process for obtaining the resources of the agency, and prepare the family in terms of what to expect. A letter of appreciation should be sent to the agency representative, thanking them for giving their time for the meeting, cooperating with Head Start, and assisting the family.

Compare the observations made and information gathered during the family interview with any information obtained from other agencies. If the family is working with or becomes involved with other agencies, social services personnel and agency staff should periodically assess their joint progress in helping the family to achieve the goals that they have established for themselves; and then jointly make any necessary changes in approaches used to assist the family.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

After the interview and agency contacts have been completed, the social services staff should follow up these activities with the family.

First, staff should review and analyze all the information they have collected and determine what the family's strengths are, what support is needed from Head Start and who should provide the support, and what additional outside support services are needed. The staff should then set up an appointment to visit the family and discuss their findings.

With the family members, social services staff should establish specific, realistic, and measurable objectives. The objectives should reflect the interests and concerns of the family. Family and staff should determine how the family and Head Start can work together to achieve the established objectives, and should identify areas of responsibility for family and staff members in working toward the objectives. Realistic expectations and schedules should be set, and confidentiality must be assured.

Back at the Head Start center, staff should meet with their supervisor to discuss which staff members have the skills and knowledge to assist the family in carrying out their plan of action, and how the identified Head Start staff members can best work together as a team.

PREPARE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN

The social services staff can now develop a written family profile and assistance plan. The profile and FAP will describe the family in such terms as:

- Family composition
- How the family developed (i.e., marriage, living with, adoption, death of some family member, moving around, break-away from nuclear family, someone began taking care of someone else)
- Educational desires and needs
- How the family enjoys its members
- Physical, emotional and social perceptions and descriptions
- What the family has to offer Head Start
- What Head Start has to offer the family
- Perceived family strengths and areas that can be strengthened
- Family's determination areas
- Agency involvements
- Significant, realistic future plans and objectives

The Family Assistance Plan should be developed with an eye toward termination of support services from other agencies and increased reliance on internal family strengths.

The social services staff should conduct periodic interviews with the family to evaluate their mutual progress in implementing the plan and achieving objectives, and to make any needed changes or modifications.

Chapter Seven

PROVIDING SERVICES TO MEET NEEDS

The key element in determining the success of any Head Start social services program is the degree to which the families involved receive the support services they need to improve their lifestyle and enhance the quality of their lives.

The Performance Standards for the social services component of Head Start require the provision of services in five general areas:

- Counseling or making referrals for appropriate counseling.
- Emergency assistance and/or crisis intervention.
- Sharing information about community resources and how to use them.
- Follow-up to assure delivery of services.
- Monitoring frequent absenteeism.

COUNSELING AND REFERRAL

Head Start counseling and referral services include personal counseling, marriage and family counseling, and counseling related to the parent-child relationship. Counseling is a very personal area which can result in major and significant alterations or changes in peoples' lives. Therefore, counseling must be undertaken with care, and only after much preparation on the part of the counselor, whether or not that counselor is Head Start staff or other agency staff.

Staff should not make unrealistic commitments to families or family members. The credibility of Head Start in the community, and the ability of the social services staff to continue working effectively with parents is at stake, and should be kept uppermost in mind.

Counseling referrals are important because they require the proper matching of families or individuals with counselors. The social services staff should direct their attention to locating all available counseling services in the community, establishing personal contact with a key person in each, and obtaining as much information as possible about each counseling service.

Staff can then review family needs assessments as counseling requests are made, identify the appropriate agency to handle the request and discuss the process with the family or individual family member. The social services staff will be prepared to make a good referral, and can follow up with the family and the counselor to ensure that effective counseling is being provided.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Emergency assistance and crisis intervention activities represent an extremely sensitive area of social services. These activities involve providing families with essential support in times of emergency or family crisis.

Where Head Start cannot provide emergency assistance or crisis intervention, it is the role of the social services staff to identify, and become completely knowledgeable about, all crisis intervention programs available to the community, to establish contact with someone working in these programs, and be informed about the eligibility requirements of each.

Even when Head Start cannot provide all the services or meet every need, the role of the social services staff is critical to families in times of emergency or crisis. It is important for the staff to evidence personal interest, maintain contact with the family, and provide support both personally and in terms of locating needed outside services.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The resources within the community which can provide directly the services needed by Head Start parents and families are key elements in the social services program. Chapter Eight discusses more completely the role of community services in the Head Start social services program, but some activities related to community resources can be discussed here.

Social services staff should be well informed with regard to all of the various resources for the provision of support services which are available to the residents of the community in which the Head Start program is located. The staff should develop a directory of available services, maintain a master list in the Head Start office on 3 × 5 file cards for easy reference, and provide copies of the directory to all families enrolled in the program.

The directory should contain the following information about each agency or service listed:

- *Name* and *address* of the agency, organization, or person providing the service.
- A *description of* the *services* available through this resource.
- *Telephone numbers* (for day and evening, if available).
- *Hours* of operation (when services can be obtained).
- *Procedures* for securing services and *eligibility* requirements.
- *Directions* for getting to the facility in which the services are located.

Once the directory of community services is prepared, the social services staff should conduct a training session for families on how to use it. Training and education within the context of social services refers to all those activities which stimulate families and individuals to use their own abilities to better the conditions under which they live. In other words, training and education activities should help people attain the skills and techniques necessary to influence and control the forces that affect their lives.

The training session should include an orientation to the directory and how to locate items. The session should also provide an interpretation of the various services available, the eligibility requirements which families must meet to receive services, and the procedures for actually obtaining services. Time should be allowed for a question and answer period following the session.

Social services staff should make personal contact with each service provider listed in the directory, and should place the contact person's name for each provider on the card in the master file. This will expedite the processing of referrals when they become necessary.

FOLLOW-UP

An important activity for the social services staff is following up on referrals to other service providers to make certain that families actually receive the services requested. Follow-up includes contacting the agency to which the family was referred, as well as checking with the family to determine whether or not services were received and how the family was treated by the service provider.

MONITOR ABSENTEEISM

Children enrolled in the Head Start program may miss classes due to circumstances at home with which the social services staff could help. A parent may be ill and unable to get the child ready for school; the child may be sick and need to see a doctor; the family may not have the financial resources to buy clothes or shoes for the child.

In all of these instances, Head Start can provide assistance, but the staff must be aware of the problem in order to know that support is needed. Part of the job of the social services staff is to find out the reasons behind absenteeism, and to provide help when needed, so that the absent child can return to the classroom. Classroom teachers and social services staff should work together in keeping track of frequent absences and family needs.

Chapter Eight

COORDINATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ADVOCACY

The objectives for the social services staff in the roles of coordinators and advocates are three-fold:

1. To develop a system for linking available resources within the community.
2. To channel parents into the mainstream of community life in the most effective manner.
3. To act as spokespersons for the parents and families enrolled in Head Start, and to serve as Head Start's representatives in the community.

Coordination of resources and advocacy are terms which can have numerous meanings. For the purposes of the social services program in Head Start, the following definitions explain the roles of coordination and advocacy:

Coordination refers to the development of a mechanism for connecting services provided by Head Start with services provided by other existing agencies or organizations (both formal and informal) for the purpose of meeting the needs of the Head Start families.

Advocacy refers to speaking, acting, or interacting on behalf of the Head Start families who are enrolled in the program, and representing Head Start in the larger community.

COORDINATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

One of the major functions of social services is to bring together all those programs in the community that have resources or services that could be used by the family to meet its needs. In the community, this might mean working with the local welfare department, public health services, the recreation department, Veteran's Administration, the social services programs of churches, the Salvation Army, Home Extension agents, private and public social agencies, local businesses, and even the local police and fire departments. This pulling together (or coordinating) of forces in a common effort to improve and enrich the lives of Head Start families is what was known in the 1960's as community action. It is the process of building bridges between government officials and private groups; between professionals and laymen; between and among agencies which operate related programs; and between Head Start families and those opportunities which could help them to become more self-sufficient.

Head Start Families and Other Community Groups

Part of the job of coordinating Head Start activities with those of other support groups in the community is assisting Head Start parent and family groups to work with other groups in the community.

Some of the effective strategies (methods) which the social services staff can use to support families as they begin to interact with community resources through Head Start are outlined below:

- Become thoroughly familiar with available community resources, both within the area served by the Head Start center and the larger community.
- Hold parent and family group meetings and invite presentors from local community agencies and/or organizations to discuss their operations. Include a question and answer period for participants.
- Accompany parents on initial visits to individual service providers, agencies, or organizations in groups as well as on an individual basis.

- Help parents identify specific problems and to associate them with the most logical agency to provide the service.
- Be aware of the track record of various community agencies and service providers in terms of their ability to produce for Head Start clients.
- Do not over-sell the ability of an agency to provide a service. This could lead to a drastic disappointment. Be as accurate and objective as possible.

The social services staff can be very helpful to families as they develop self-confidence and independence in dealing with the community service providers.

Directory of Community Services

The preparation of a directory of community services was discussed in Chapter Seven, but it is worthwhile to review the steps which social services staff can take to develop a complete and useful resource list.

- Compile a list of potential resource agencies to be used by the Head Start program, using existing resource directories and information from parents and other staff.
- Extract (pull out) from the overall list those agencies most accessible to the Head Start families.
- Contact extracted agencies and request information regarding the services they provide.
- Once information is received, compile a Head Start resource list, placing agencies in appropriate catagories (e.g., health, housing, public assistance, etc.).
- Distribute the directory to families at a meeting during which information contained in the directory can be discussed by parents, other family members, and staff.
- Maintain master list and contact persons for each service provider on 3 × 5 cards for ready reference and ease in making changes.

Coordination, Cooperation and Information Sharing

Once contacts have been made with the service providers in the community, and communication has been initiated, it is important to keep the lines of communication open. Periodic contacts, in person or over the telephone, will help to maintain coordination efforts and stimulate cooperative activities. Information sharing keeps everyone involved in the process aware of (1) what the others are doing; (2) what progress is being made by each member toward the common objective; and (3) new directions that are being considered to accomplish goals.

The social services staff is the primary link between the Head Start center and the community. Some of the things which the staff can do to foster and maintain coordination, cooperation, and information sharing are listed below:

- Establish a team that will review agency participation, sincerity, and capability regarding the delivery of services to Head Start families previously referred.
- Refer to the intake (enrollment) form to identify those agencies with which the family is presently involved (receiving services or requested services). Contact appropriate person to determine the extent to which they are involved in working with the family.
- Keep participating agency informed of the progress (or lack of) that you see, and/or that the family expresses in relation to the specific service(s) that have been requested.
- Make suggestions to the participating agency as to the necessary steps to be taken by the agency to remove any barriers that prohibit the agency from effectively servicing Head Start families.
- Contact agencies to commend them when they have done a good job of getting services to a Head Start family in need.
- Make sure that the participating agency is on the Head Start mailing list and is receiving any newsletters, reports, brochures, announcements, etc., that the Head Start program distributes.
- Request that the Head Start program be placed on the participating agency's mailing list.

ADVOCACY

Helping the child and his family to function as his own advocate is the ultimate goal of advocacy in the social services program of Head Start. Head Start can help to strengthen the relationship between families and the community by helping Head Start families to learn what the community can and should provide for them and, in turn, what they can and should provide to help the community to grow and improve.

Communicating Head Start Needs to the Community

Social responsibility is the degree to which the community feels responsible for the welfare of all its members — including those who are unable to care for themselves because of poverty, ill health, old age, and/or lack of education — and it is visibly expressed by the adequacy of services and resources it offers to help them. In some communities the social services staff may have to concentrate on making the community aware of its social responsibility by encouraging it to provide necessary services and resources for families that are lacking; while in other communities the job might be coordinating and directing the multitude of available services and resources so that families are able to utilize them for their maximum benefit. In both cases, it is most important for the staff and concerned community persons to work together as a team to understand and satisfy the current relative needs of Head Start families, as well as to anticipate future needs and prepare for them.

The checklist below outlines steps which staff can take in communicating the needs of the families they are working with to the other agencies in the community, and in translating needs into support services provided by these agencies.

- Determine which needs are to be transmitted and make certain that you understand all aspects of the problem.
- Discuss the need with the parent and family prior to transmitting them to an outside agency. Remember, the family has entrusted you with information regarding their personal situation. Obtain consent from the family to seek assistance through other channels. (This may be accomplished as part of the needs assessment interview).
- Develop a relationship with a primary contact person within the given resource agency or organization and work through this contact person to the maximum extent possible.
- Whenever possible, have parent or other family member go with you to the agency on the initial visit where you discuss their problem.
- Encourage family members to build a rapport with the agency on initial visit. This is one of the major steps in the building of self-confidence.
- Follow-up contact with a "pursuant to our meeting letter." This serves as a reminder to the resource agency as well as documentation for the social services files.
- Encourage the agency to be honest as to whether or not they can actually meet the needs of the family; and ask them to recommend other service providers if they cannot.

Improving Available Services

It is the responsibility of Head Start to help families in their efforts to bring about changes in the community that will meet their relative needs and provide greater opportunities for a secure future.

The social services staff should encourage the community to meet its social responsibility by modifying or altering its present institutions to the point where they adequately meet the needs of its citizens, and by developing needed resources and services in demand. Part of the advocacy job of the social services staff is to make the community aware of inadequacies in existing services, to assist in improving available services, and to advocate for the creation of new services in support areas where no services are currently available.

The following list is designed for use as a guide to social services staff in fulfilling their role as advocates.

- Identify those services that families need and are unavailable to them.
- Re-examine the resource list to insure that the void actually exists.

- Determine the severity of the need and how many other community residents are affected by the lack of services.
- Involve families in bringing the need to the attention of the appropriate body, using some of the following methods, depending on the severity of need:

  Contact the responsible agency (i.e., local government, school system, housing department, etc.)

  Send letters to appropriate government officials and/or local legislative body.

  Speak with or write to local representatives (i.e., school boards, city councils, etc.)

  Contact appropriate person within the state agency.

  Solicit the support of other agencies in bringing the need to the attention of the appropriate agency or person.

The support which the social services staff provides in their roles as community coordinators and Head Start advocates is perhaps the most important contribution they can make to Head Start families. In addition to helping families obtain services needed immediately, the support provided by staff here helps families to recognize and assume their own advocacy roles with greater confidence, and promotes changes within the community which will eventually benefit all residents.

Chapter Nine

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING RECORDS

Establishing and maintaining accurate records is an important function of the social services staff. There are five primary purposes for efficient recordkeeping in Head Start:

1. *Evaluation:* Recording activities and outcomes assists staff in evaluating the effectiveness of their delivery of services to families.
2. *Accountability:* Well-kept records provide documentation for the staff in terms of work performed, and serve as a measure of accountability.
3. *Organization:* A carefully maintained record-keeping system helps staff to organize their social services program, to conduct periodic reviews of progress, and to plan future activities.
4. *Training:* Recordkeeping provides a two-fold training foundation. Information contained in the records can help staff to identify the training and education needs and interests of the families with whom they are working. Additionally, in-service or pre-service training for social services staff can revolve around recordkeeping and the information contained therein.
5. *Research:* Records can provide an excellent source of data (information) about the program for internal and external research efforts.

There are three main aspects of efficient recordkeeping, that should be considered by social services staff as they review their recordkeeping procedures:

- Establishing the system and setting up the files.
- Keeping records current and meaningful.
- Maintaining confidentiality of information obtained.

SETTING UP THE FILES

A file should be maintained on each family served by the Head Start program. The family file should contain at least the following, and any other information which the staff feels is relevant:

- Recruitment/enrollment card
- Verification of family income
- Letter of acceptance into the Head Start program (letters of non-acceptance should also be developed for mailing to families who have made application to but were not accepted by Head Start).
- Family profile developed during FNA interview.
- Record of each contact made with family by social services staff.
- Reports of all home visits made by social services staff.
- Attendance records of child/children enrolled in the program.

If a working file has not already been established, or if the existing file is inadequate or out-dated, staff members may need to develop procedures, letters, and forms for obtaining and recording the necessary information. Sample forms for the family profile, staff contacts with the family, and home visit reports follow. Another form that will be needed for the file if additional support services are needed is some sort of referral report form. It should contain the following information:

- family name
- date of request
- service requested
- provider referred
- service provided by referral
- follow-up action
- family assessment of service

FAMILY PROFILE

Family Name: Brown

Address: 1605 Elm Street

Telephone: 432-6152

Description of Surrounding Neighborhood: Generally clean and neat. Few trees. No playground nearby except on school lot four blocks away.

Physical Description of Home: Well cared for. Lots of plants. Some books (mostly adult paperbacks). Plenty of seating space for family.

Family Members:

Adults	*Children*	*Age*
Mr. Brown (Father)	Jason	15
Mrs. Brown (Mother)	Elizabeth	13
Mr. Brown, Sr. (Grandfather)	James	7
	Philip	6
	Lena	4

Family Interactions: Family finishing dinner when I arrived. Lots of friendly teasing between members. Children took over clean-up detail and joined us later. Much touching and laughter. Grandfather appears to drink heavily but manages auto repair shop and loves to talk about cars. Father drives bus for city. Mrs. Brown out of work.

Adult Interests and Needs:

Mr. Brown — likes bowling. Wants to finish GED so that he can apply for higher position in Department of Transportation.

Ms. Brown — would like part-time job. Has worked in school cafeteria and as waitress before.

Mr. Brown, Sr. — Automobiles

Interest and Needs of Children:

Jason — Wants part-time job. Likes music. Has large record collection.

Elizabeth — Loves drama. Would like to take dance lessons.

James and Philip — Baseball and television. James may need glasses.

Lena — Enjoys picture books and rhyming stories. Not much of a TV bug. Needs some immunization shots.

FAMILY CONTACTS: 1980 — 1981 SCHOOL YEAR

Date	Method	Purpose	Outcome(s)
8-4-80	Telephone call	Set up appointment for FNA interview.	• Interview scheduled for 8/12 at 7:00 p.m. • All family members will be present.
8-12-80	Personal visit	Conduct FNA interview.	• Interview completed. • Family profile developed.
10-5-80	Telephone call	Invite Mr. Brown, Sr. to share auto repairing skills with meeting of Head Start fathers on 10/19.	• Mr. Brown very pleased. • Participated in meeting. • Several fathers interested in setting up monthly workshops.
12-11-80	Telephone call	Invite family to center Christmas pot Luck supper 12/23.	• Family plans to attend.

HOME VISIT REPORT

Date	Purpose	Outcomes
8-12-80	FNA Interview	• Interview completed successfully. • Family profile developed and filed.
11-6-80	Accompany Mrs. Brown and Lena to clinic.	• Lena saw Dr. Jones, received immunizations, has appointment for January. • Mrs. Brown feels comfortable with taking Lena by herself for the next visit.
2-7-81	Work with Mrs. Brown on at-home activities.	• Discussed things she likes to do with the children. • Identified items at home that could be used for activities. • Sent Mrs. Brown two (2) Dr. Seuss books from center/home library.

KEEPING RECORDS CURRENT

In order to keep records up-to-date and meaningful, the social services staff should review the files of all families assigned to each regularly. The family profile should be reviewed and added to as the staff member gets to know the family better. Changes in address, phone numbers, family members living at home, etc. should be made as soon as information becomes available.

All forms should be dated, and recordkeeping should be coordinated with the other components to avoid unnecessary duplication. Entries for referrals and home visits should be made immediatley after contact whenever possible, and at least once a week by the staff member assigned to the family.

All files should be reviewed at least once a year to revise forms, update information, and discard information not being used. All family records should be kept on file for at least three (3) years from date of enrollment.

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

The Parent Policy Committee and the social services staff should work together to establish criteria for confidentiality of records. Confidentiality means keeping what parents and family members share with the social services staff private. If families understand what information will be kept strictly confidential, unless they authorize its release in writing, and what information needs to be shared and with whom, in order to provide assistance, they will be more open and honest in their responses to requests for personal information.

Records must be kept in a locked file cabinet and the staff should determine who shall have access to the file — access should be limited to one or two persons. Parents and volunteers should be prohibited from reviewing any records except their own, and staff should be allowed to review records only for specific purposes and with the approval of the staff member responsible for records maintenance.

Information should be released only after written consent is obtained from the head of the family concerned. Family permission forms for the release of information to agencies or individuals, should be developed by staff, signed by the designated family representative, and kept on file for the protection of both the family and the service provider.

Chapter Ten

HEAD START'S LEGACY TO FAMILIES

> *"It is necessary while in darkness, to know that there is light somewhere, to know that in oneself, waiting to be found, there is light."*
>
> — *James Baldwin.*

Perhaps the greatest gift Head Start can give a family is trust. And families do leave the program with trust — in themselves and their ability to cope with the world; in other people and the capability of others to respond to them on an equal level; and in a future that will become increasingly rewarding, because they will make it so. For families leave Head Start with greater confidence in themselves as individuals and as an effective social unit. They are more aware of their value as a socializing force and of their strengths. They understand their rights more completely, and have learned to use the resources available to them to assure these rights.

The question is: How can social services in Head Start help families to develop autonomous activities; that is, the sense of self-direction, the feeling of mastery and, most of all, the feeling of movement, going somewhere based upon one's own decision and choice? The mission of a social services program in Head Start is for

(1) training and education of families,

(2) mobilizing community and other resources as social utilities and as provisions to meet the developmental needs of participants, and

(3) Providing missing services while promoting institutional change as social responsibility.

Specifically, the mission of social services in Head Start should be to transmit the values of human dignity and human services in such a way as to strengthen the human spirit of those who have for so very long been afraid and frustrated, and felt rejected. The aim is to help families enhance their lives through training, education and support activities designed to increase their social and economic power. Families should be enabled to forge their own path from dependence through independence and move toward experiences in interdependence with other persons and organizations.

Human dignity is the touchstone of democracy. Social services are human services, and as such the general objective of the social services program in Head Start is to strengthen the dignity of the families served by the program. The program is designed to

- Provide opportunities for families to participate in training and education activities which will stimulate them to learn new skills and techniques for use in changing the conditions under which they live.
- Assist families as they examine public social policies and do what is necessary to gain access to services and resources.
- Help families mobilize resources that will benefit their own and other families, and discover how to utilize available resources productively.
- Identify and provide missing services while working with families and other groups to promote institutional change in the community.

The ultimate goal of social services in Head Start is to have families leave the program with

- Enhanced awareness of their individual and joint strengths.
- Improved ability to identify and assess their needs.
- Increased capacity to locate and utilize community supports and resources to their advantage.
- Strengthened family pride, dignity, and respect.
- Fewer barriers to their ability to engage in meaningful activities with their children as the prime educators of their children.

Head Start believes in families. The families who have completed the Head Start program will continue to provide their children with opportunities to grow and learn. They know where to go for assistance within the community and how to work within the community system to effect the changes they need. Head Start families will face future encounters within the community (teachers, landlords, community service providers, etc.) undaunted by former fears, secure within themselves, knowledgable about their rights, and convinced that they will be heard. They will leave the program with a greater sense of trust in themselves and in the world in which they live.

*U.S. Government Printing Office: 1994 — 515-003/00008